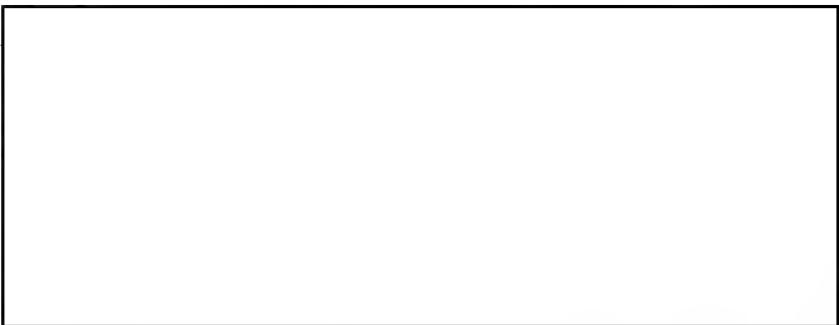


25X1



PLEASE PASS THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM MR CARVER D/DCI/NIO  
TO MR B. E. LAYTON A/NIO/SSEA  
0 262130Z MAR 75 ZYH  
FM SSO ALCOM  
TO YERKEDC/SSO ACSI DA WASH  
FOR: MR. B.E. LAYTON, A/NIO/SSEA, FROM MR. CARVER, D/DCI/NIO.  
1. I HAVE READ THE DRAFT OF THE VIETNAM APPRAISAL ON THE PLANE AND  
OFFER THE COMMENTS BELOW FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION. THESE ARE NOT  
KEYED TO PRECISE TEXT (WHICH WILL HAVE BEEN REVISED DURING THE  
26 MARCH COORDINATION SESSION ANYWAY). INSTEAD, THEY RELATE TO  
TONE AND OVERALL IMPRESSION.  
2. I AM NOT WELL VERSED IN THE FACTUAL DETAILS OF THE SOUTH VIETNAM  
SITUATION, BUT, TO BE BLUNT AT THE RISK OF BEING RUDE, I AM NOT  
MUCH BETTER VERSED AFTER READING THE 25 MARCH DRAFT. IT IS LIGHT  
ON FACTUAL DETAIL AND HEAVY ON RHETORIC WHICH STRIKES THE EYE OF  
A COLD READER (PERHAPS UNFAIRLY) AS HIGHLY EMOTIONAL. INDEED,  
MY CHIEF PROBLEMS WITH IT RELATE TO THE FACT THAT ITS LANGUAGE  
IS, BY AND LARGE, (A) PERPLEXINGLY, EVEN IRRITATINGLY, VAGUE  
AND, AT THE SAME TIME, (B) STRIDENTLY SHRILL--OR AT LEAST THAT  
IS HOW IT CAME ACROSS TO ME.  
3. ON THE TONE, THE DRAFT IS SPRINKLED--LOADED--WITH COLOR WORDS  
AND PHRASES: "DESPERATE", "BLEAK", "COLLAPSE", "MOST SERIOUS COMMAND  
MISCALCULATIONS IN THE VIETNAMESE WAR", ETC., ETC. SUCH TERMS TO BE  
FRANK, TELL A READER CONSIDERABLY MORE ABOUT THE DRAFTER'S MOOD  
THAN THE SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM.  
4. ON VAGUENESS, LOOK AT PHRASES SUCH AS THESE REPRESENTATIVE  
EXAMPLES: "THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE LOST THE 23RD DIVISION AND TWO  
RANGER GROUPS" (P. 3)--ALL OF THEM? "LARGE NUMBERS OF REPLACE-  
MENTS", "LARGE NORTH VIETNAMESE FORCE", "FEW TROOPS GUARDING THE  
CITY", "SEVERAL WEEKS" (ALL FROM P. 4). "SEVERAL COMMUNIST  
DIVISIONS AND INDEPENDENT REGIMENTS", "SOME TROOPS FROM THE  
TAY NINH FRONT" (P. 5), ETC. THE READER GETS NO CLUE REGARDING  
THE DRAFTER'S DEFINITION OF "LARGE NUMBER", OR HOW MANY IS  
"SEVERAL", "FEW", OR "SOME."  
5. THE SECTION ENTITLED "THIEU GOVERNMENT DISCREDITED" (BEGINNING  
ON PAGE 10) IS PERHAPS THE BEST REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLE OF MY  
PROBLEM. THE HEADING IS A REAL GRABBER. ON TURNING THE PAGE,

HOWEVER, Approved For Release 2004/06/14 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000400100021-0  
THE REBELLION IS FLAT ASSERTION THAT "THE PRESIDENT IS UNDOUBTEDLY WIDELY DIS-  
CREDITED . . ." WORDS SUCH AS "UNDOUBTEDLY" MAKE ME EDGY, PAR-  
TICULARLY IN AN INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE. THIS SECTION STARTS WITH  
A VERGILIAN STROPHE: "AS THE COMMUNISTS TAKE OVER MAJOR CITY  
AFTER MAJOR CITY AND PROVINCE AFTER PROVINCE . . ." THE RHETORIC  
RINGS WITH A ROLLING KNELL OF DOOM, BUT ISN'T ITS FACTUAL BASIS  
A TRIFLE SHAKY? TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, THE ONLY MAJOR  
CITY THE COMMUNISTS HAVE TAKEN (TO DATE) IS HUE.

6. I AM NOT FOR A MOMENT ARGUING THAT THE DRAFT APPRECIATION'S  
JUDGMENTS ABOUT THE FUTURE ARE WRONG. THEY MAY INDEED BE EX-  
ACTLY RIGHT. THE TROUBLE IS, HOWEVER, THAT FOR THE REASONS NOTED  
ABOVE THE JUDGMENTS ARE SIMPLY NOT PERSUASIVE AS STATED AND  
SUPPORTED IN THE DRAFT.

7. IN A CONFUSED PERIOD OF HEAVY MILITARY ACTION WHOSE OUTCOME  
PROBABLY WILL SET THE COURSE OF EVENTS FOR AT LEAST THE NEXT  
SEVERAL YEARS, THE TWO THINGS ESTIMATES MOST NEED ARE TWO OF THE  
HARDEST TO ACHIEVE OR SUSTAIN: PROPORTION AND PERSPECTIVE.  
WE WOULD BE DERELICT IN OUR RESPONSIBILITIES IF WE WERE TO  
OSTRICH IN THE FACE OF IMPENDING DISASTER, BUT IT IS EQUALLY UN-  
PROFESSIONAL TO PLAY CHICKEN LITTLE. WHERE THE FACTS ARE BLEAK,  
WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO STATE THEM CANDIDLY; BUT WE HAVE AN  
EQUAL OBLIGATION TO BE CANDID ABOUT THE UNCERTAIN NATURE OF OUR  
EVIDENCE (WHEN IT IS UNCERTAIN) AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH OUR  
CONCLUSIONS ARE BASED ON INFERENCES DERIVED FROM WHAT WE THINK  
(PERHAPS CORRECTLY) MUST BE HAPPENING AS OPPOSED TO WHAT WE  
ACTUALLY KNOW IS HAPPENING.

8. I HOPE THE 26 MARCH COORDINATION SESSION TAKES CARE OF SOME OF  
THE POINTS NOTED ABOVE. I AM CONCERNED THAT THE PRESENT (25 MARCH)  
TYPE OF LANGUAGE WOULD ENTAIL THE RISK OF MISLEADING OUR POLICY-  
LEVEL CONSUMERS IF THE SKY IS NOT (YET) FALLING, OR DILUTE OUR  
WARNING BY DAMAGING OUR CREDIBILITY IF IT IS.

9. NEW SUBJECT. WHILE ON THIS MISSION I WOULD APPRECIATE BEING  
KEPT ADVISED OF ANY MAJOR NEW INTELLIGENCE, PARTICULARLY NORTH  
VIETNAMESE, SOVIET, OR CHINESE DEVELOPMENTS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE  
25 MARCH DRAFT (P. 2) SPEAKS OF ONE OF HANOI'S FIVE REMAINING  
RESERVE DIVISIONS (320B) MOVING SOUTH. PARA 6 OF TDFIRDB-315/03582-75  
SAYS "A SUBSTANTIAL PART OF THE SEVEN STRATEGIC RESERVE DIVISIONS  
IN NORTH VIETNAM HAVE BEEN COMMITTED TO THE SOUTH". ARE THESE  
TWO STATEMENTS CONSISTENT OR NOT? PLEASE LET ME KNOW YOUR VIEWS  
ON STATUS OF STRATEGIC RESERVE UNIT MOVEMENTS FROM NORTH VIETNAM  
SINCE 1 JANUARY AND PLEASE APPRISE ME OF ANY CHANGES.

MANY THANKS.

XGDS-2

SSO NOTE: DELIVER AT OPENING OF BUSINESS 27 MAR 75  
#0108

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